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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:	L. Lloyd WILLIAMS
Filed:	Concurrently herewith.
Serial No.:	Not yet assigned. Divisional of U.S. Serial No. 09/995,971
Title:	METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR PROVIDING ACCESS TO A VOICE MAIL SYSTEM
Group Art Unit:	2642

Mail Stop Patent Application

Commissioner for Patents
United States Patent and Trademark Office
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450
U.S.A.

Sir:

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

As a preliminary amendment, please amend the above-identified patent application as follows:

A listing of the title amendment appears on page 2 of this paper.

A listing of the disclosure amendments appears on page 3 of this paper.

A listing of the claims appears on page 7 of this paper.

Remarks/Arguments appear on page 14 of this paper.

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LISTING OF TITLE AMENDMENT

Please amend the title of the application to read **--SYSTEM FOR PROVIDING ACCESS TO A VOICE MAIL SYSTEM--**.

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LISTING OF DISCLOSURE AMENDMENTS

Please amend paragraphs 1, 3, 5, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 of the specification as follows:

Paragraph [01] (Currently Amended)

~~This is the first application filed for the present invention.~~ This application is a division of United States patent application Serial No. 09/995,971, filed November 28, 2001.

Paragraph [03] (Currently Amended)

The present invention relates to call processing in the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), and, in particular, to a ~~method~~ system of establishing a call connection directly to a voice mail system subscriber's voice mail box.

Paragraph [05] (Currently Amended)

~~Methods~~ Systems for enabling voice mail services are well known in the art. Typically, when a calling party makes a telephone call to a telephone service subscriber, call set-up messages are generated and forwarded through the public switched telephone network (PSTN) to a service switching point (SSP) that serves the service subscriber's telephone. If the SSP is unable to complete the call connection (e.g. the call is not answered after a predefined number of rings; or the line is busy) and the telephone service subscriber also subscribes to a voice mail service, the SSP redirects the call to a VMS that hosts a voice mail box assigned to the service subscriber.

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Paragraph [11] (Currently Amended)

Accordingly, there exists a need for a ~~method and~~ system for providing access to a voice mail box that enables a party to record a message in a service subscriber's voice mail box without first attempting to complete a call to the service subscriber.

Paragraph [12] (Currently Amended)

It is therefore an object of the invention to provide a ~~method~~ system for enabling direct access to a voice mail box associated with a service subscriber to a voice mail system (VMS).

Paragraph [13] (Currently Amended)

It is another object of the invention to provide a ~~method and~~ system for enabling a 'click to voice mail' option from a web page or an electronic mail message to enable a user browsing the Internet to request a call connection to an associated voice mail box without first attempting a call to the subscriber.

Paragraph [14] (Currently Amended)

A further object of the invention is to provide a ~~method and~~ system for enabling directory service providers to provide direct access to the voice mail boxes of VMS subscribers.

Paragraph [15] (Currently Amended)

The invention therefore provides a ~~method that comprises~~ ~~formulating and issuing a call set-up message for initiating the~~

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~~establishment of a call connection to a VMS. The call set-up message has a format reserved for a redirected call set-up message issued by a service switching point (SSP) in response to an uncompleted call to the service subscriber. For example, if the call is issued into a signaling system 7 (SS7) CCS network, the call set-up message is an integrated users digital network user part (ISUP) initial address message (IAM) containing (in an optional part of a signaling information portion of a signaling information field) a redirecting number parameter, an original called number parameter, and a redirection information parameter, in conformance with a SS7 standard. The IAM contains all of the information required by the VMS to select a voice mail box, and a greeting message associated therewith. In particular, the IAM contains a directory number (DN) of the service subscriber in the redirecting number parameter, and a redirecting reason code in the redirection information parameter. Preferably the redirecting reason code is a reason code used to indicate that the IAM is for a direct access call system for enabling a requesting party to initiate a telephone call directly to a voice mail box associated with a service subscriber to a voice mail system (VMS), comprising: a call control node configured as a virtual service switching point in a switched telephone network, the call control node being adapted to receive a message requesting setup of a direct call to a voice mail box, and to respond to the message by formulating a call set-up message to initiate establishment of a call connection to the VMS, the call set-up message having a format reserved for redirected call set-up messages used by service switching points (SSPs) to redirect~~

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uncompleted calls to the service subscriber, so that the VMS provides
access to the voice mail box.